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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 002310

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SUBJECT: DUTCH MFA ON GYMnich, MEPP, AND IRAQ

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[B](#). B. THE HAGUE 02227

Classified By: Classified by Political Counselor Mary E. Daly for reasons 1.5 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: PolCouns and PolOff met with MFA Director for Political Affairs Jaap Werner and Deputy Director Joop Wijnands on September 9 to discuss the results of the September 5-6 EU Foreign Ministers Gymnich meeting. Werner termed the September 2-3 visit of PM Balkenende and FM de Hoop Scheffer to Washington very productive. Wijnands, who attended the Gymnich meeting, confirmed that the main topics discussed were the Middle East peace process (MEPP), Iraq, and the InterGovernmental Conference (IGC). Discussion of the European Security Strategy (ESS) was limited as there was already broad consensus on the approach (Ref B). In asking them about Gymnich, the Dutch took the opportunity to discuss Middle East policy more broadly. Wijnands said "everyone is worried" about the MEPP, and there is a high degree of EU consensus on the issue. According to Wijnands, EU countries see Arafat as both part of the problem, as well as part of the solution. On Iraq, France and Germany restated their previous positions. There was however a different atmosphere from previous meetings, with Germany agreeing with the UK that the transfer of authority should not be rushed. Wijnands felt that in order to arrive at an EU consensus on the Iraq resolution, there need only be small adjustments in terminology and the role of the UN. While the Dutch acknowledged the need for a unified command under the U.S., Werner offered the additional idea of a proportional, sectoral approach to multinational and U.S. involvement. Werner also noted a prospective visit of FM de Hoop Scheffer to the region at the end of September. End Summary.

PM Balkenende and FM de Hoop Scheffer's Visit to Washington

[1](#)2. (C) PolCouns and PolOff met with MFA Director for Political Affairs Jaap Werner and Deputy Director Joop Wijnands on September 9 to discuss the results of the September 5-6 EU Foreign Ministers Gymnich meeting. Werner described the September 2-3 visit of PM Balkenende and FM de Hoop Scheffer to Washington as "very good, very productive." Werner felt that the visit was very well-timed, referring to the "opening up of Iraq" to UN and multinational involvement. Both Werner and Wijnands lamented the cynical bias of the Dutch press prior to the visit.

MEPP

[1](#)3. (C) Wijnands, who attended the Gymnich meeting, said the two main foreign policy topics were the Middle East peace process (MEPP) and Iraq. Discussion of the European Security Strategy (ESS) was limited as there was already broad consensus on the EU approach (Ref B). Wijnands said "everyone is worried" about the MEPP, and that the resignation of Abbas, which took place during the meeting, added to concerns. He said it was clear at Gymnich that EU countries see Arafat as part of the problem, and also part of the solution. The EU does not see sidelining Arafat as a real option, and believe it important to keep Arafat involved at some level. The feeling at Gymnich was that without the blessing of Arafat, there will be no solution. That said, there is no clear line on how the EU plans to deal with Arafat. There is an understanding that Solana cannot go around Arafat, but that EU member states should be "very modest" in their contact. Werner mentioned that FM de Hoop Scheffer plans to go to the Middle East at the end of September, but that his itinerary is not set at this time.

[1](#)4. (C) The Dutch believe the risk of Israel exiling Arafat is "clearly there," and they are looking to the U.S. to help prevent Arafat's exile. (Note: This discussion took place prior to Israel's announced intention to remove Arafat.) He said there is also the question of how much the U.S. will invest in Qurei as the new Palestinian Authority Prime Minister, if he is approved by the Palestinian Parliament, particularly after investing so much in Abbas. Wijnands said the upcoming Quartet meeting was an opportunity to reenergize the commitment to the MEPP, and expressed concern that "not enough on a daily basis" was being done for the MEPP in general. Wijnands said there is no division within the EU on the Middle East. The EU had delivered on the Hamas designation, which Wijnands said was "not so hard" because

"everyone saw it as a necessary step." At the same time, Europeans feel it is very important not to seem to be condoning Israel's use of targeted assassinations against Hamas.

15. (C) Wijnands said there was agreement among EU members that viable alternatives need to be explored to jump start the MEPP, such as considering earlier elections or a peace conference. However, there are problems with both. Wijnands said earlier elections would only favor Arafat and Hamas. Similarly, he questioned whether a peace conference would help "get everything on track" if held at an earlier date, as the Road Map calls for the conference to be held only after everything is moving forward. The Dutch are concerned that decisions made at an earlier conference would be difficult to implement if overall conditions had not improved.

Iraq

16. (C) On Iraq, France and Germany restated their position, supporting the transfer of authority to the Iraqi people and an increased UN role. There was however a different atmosphere from previous meetings, with Germany agreeing with the UK that the transfer of authority should not be rushed. Wijnands believes there is increasing consensus among the EU Foreign Ministers as they work toward an agreement on the new resolution. He felt that in order to arrive at such an EU consensus, there needs only to be small adjustments in terminology and the role of the UN.

17. (C) According to Wijnands, the language in the resolution should emphasize the current interim phase in Iraq, specifically addressing the transfer of authority and the expanded role of the UN. He said there was a realization that the only way to proceed in Iraq is under a unified command led by the U.S. Werner thought there should be a study of the various sectors in Iraq, such as water and sanitation to determine what needs to be done, what the U.S. role needs to be, and if that role can be phased out. He believes that the "mixture of control" is important. In some sectors, Werner suggested the U.S. and UN maintain primary control, whereas in others, a phasing in of other countries to proportionally share the burden may be the best approach.

SOBEL